Abortion, capital punishment, religion and even desegregation are topics that cause many to feel a bit uncomfortable. These topics, and countless others, are ones in which Chief Justice Burger found himself deciding over the years. Nominated by President Nixon in 1969, he found himself facing many uncertainties in a troubled society that worried about racism and the Vietnam War.

Chief Justice Burger graduated from the University of Minnesota and then graduated magna cum laude at William Mitchell College of Law. The year was 1931. One interesting fact about his Honor is that he paid his own way through law school by selling vacuum cleaners. Immediately following graduation, he was offered a position with Boyensen, Otis and Faricy, which he promptly accepted. Before long, he found himself teaching at his alma mater; this continued for more than a decade.

Burger once said about the American justice system, "No nation on earth goes to such lengths or takes such pains to provide safeguards as we do, once an accused person is called before the bar of justice and until his case is completed". He was also of the belief the Constitution offered no room for compromise, which is one reason President Nixon supported his confirmation.

Some of his more controversial rulings:

He once found search warrants weren’t always necessary; though he was in the minority. He made his opinion known with no apologies. It should be noted that this unfolded during the infamous Watergate scandal. Although Burger supported Nixon, he realized during the Watergate scandal he was the only one who did. Instead of being the sole supporter, Burger voted with the other Justices so that he would at least be able to publish the opinion.

Burger was vehemently opposed to gay rights and was quite vocal with that hatred as well. He said sodomy was a “crime against nature (even more so than rape)”, a “disgrace to human nature” and a “crime not worthy of being named”.

Burger’s time on the bench wasn’t without occasional controversy. Many of the other Justices accused Burger of voting on certain cases so that he would be able to control the wording of the opinions. He was also accused of behaving in a passive aggressive manner that included shunning those who disagreed with his opinions.

Even as some said Burger was narcissistic, there were supporters who defended him vehemently.

Following Burger’s death, a one page will was found that dictated all of his papers be donated to the College of William and Mary. The catch was that they not be made public until the year 2026. Finally, after his retirement, Justice Burger presented to the American Bar Association his thoughts that the legal system as a whole was broken, too costly and not nearly efficient enough for ‘civilized people’.

Burger passed away from heart disease in 1995. He was 87.